

Travelling / Visiting and “revisiting” the Orient

From the early 19th century, aided by new transport technologies such as steam trains and railways, more and more European artists – and somewhat later, photographers – ventured into the Arab and Ottoman world and North Africa. They went in search of the fabled locations, exotic scenery and colourful people popularised in Europe by prominent travellers who had gone before them and who subsequently had eternalised their experiences in published diaries, spell-binding travelogues, narratives, or indeed artworks. While most of the artists and photographers spent relatively short periods in the region, during their travels, they nevertheless collected innumerable sketches, drawings and, sometimes, photographs. Back home, their fieldwork formed the basis of extensive bodies of Orientalist works, often executed over many years, and eventually only vaguely relating to the reality they had experienced on their travels. Fantasy also characterised many of the architectural projects inspired by the “Orient” – be those in the form of pavilions and palaces, mansions in garden settings, commercial complexes, or indeed lavish interiors reminiscent of those evoked in the *The Arabian Nights*.



Working Number:	DZ 162
Name:	Delacroix's journal (volume 1)
Holding Museum:	Musée national des Beaux-Arts
Date:	1893
Materials:	-
Curator Justification:	Few European artists influenced the European image of the “Orient” more extensively than the French painter Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863). Delacroix travelled widely in Morocco and Algeria and subsequently made more than 100 artworks based on what he saw (or imagined he saw).



Working Number:	DZ 091
Name:	Arab horseman
Holding Museum:	Musée National des Beaux-Arts
Date:	1846
Materials:	Pencil
Curator Justification:	This preparatory study of the Bey of Constantine is by the French artist Théodore Chassériau (1819–1909). It gives the impression of being the type of preparatory sketch typically made by artists during their travels and later used as aids-mémoire for larger, more complex compositions and paintings once back home.



Working Number:	FR 073
Name:	Harem
Holding Museum:	National Library of France
Date:	c. 1870
Materials:	-
Curator Justification:	The harem was a source of fascination among artists and a much-favoured theme that found an enthusiastic clientele in Europe. Few artists ever actually saw the inside of a harem, the private family quarters of an Eastern house.



Working Number: IT2 007
Name: Marco Polo in front of the Khan of Tartars
Holding Museum: National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM)
Date: 1863
Materials: Oil on canvas
Curator Justification: Some artists specialised in history paintings based on classical "Oriental" types known to them from literature. The type of romantic and purely imaginary Orientalist painting seen here, by the Italian artist Tranquillo Cremona, was a popular genre at the time.



Working Number: IT2 096
Name: A Druse Bride from Lebanon
Holding Museum: National Museum of Prehistory and Ethnography "Luigi Pigorini"
Date: c. 1881
Materials: Albumen
Curator Justification: From the mid-19th century, artists relied increasingly on photography to record promising subjects and scenes. A photo like this one might be used as inspiration for a painting later.



Working Number: IT2 095
Name: A Woman from Cairo
Holding Museum: National Museum of Prehistory and Ethnography "Luigi Pigorini"
Date: c. 1880
Materials: Albumen
Curator Justification: The image appears to show an ordinary Cairene lady. Although apparently an "incidental" shot, pictures like this were generally staged to evoke a certain atmosphere. Orientalist painters often made use of them to compose canvases back home.



Working Number: TR2 006
Name: Lithographs after the panoramic photograph taken by Robertson and Beato, Faust: Poligrafisch Illustrirte, Zeitschrift, 1857, Vienna
Holding Museum: Ömer M. Koç Collection
Date: 1857
Materials: 1857
Curator Justification: -
Photographs of important sites or events later enabled artists to re-create impressive vistas based on them, some realistically, and others resembling a dreamy, otherworldly mirage of the reality the camera had captured originally.



Working Number: DE 007
Name: The Damascene Hall
Holding Museum: -
Date: 1864

Materials: -
Curator Justification: The Damascene Hall in Wilhelmina Park was completed in 1864 by the court architect Professor Wilhelm Baeumer. Despite its palatial exterior, it was actually used to house pheasants and chickens!



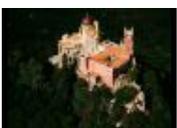
Working Number: DE 008
Name: Garden Mosque
Holding Museum: -
Date: The mosque complex comprises a cloister-like colonnade in the east (1779–84) and a main building (1782–86) flanked by two minarets (1786–95) in the west
Materials: -
Curator Justification: -
In Germany, designs in the Islamic style that borrowed from mosque architecture were used in a wide range of contexts, but none of them religious or in line with Islamic principles. This late 18th-century garden “mosque”, in the Turkish style, and part of the Schwetzingen Palace complex in Germany, is the earliest of its kind in the country.



Working Number: PD 002
Name: Toledo Railway Station
Holding Museum: -
Date: 1919/1920
Materials: -
Curator Justification: Spain, with its long and complex history of Arab-Islamic rule between the 8th and the 15th centuries, also followed the pan-European trend of Orientalising architectural design features, especially as it considered itself the cradle of the “Moorish” style. The Toledo Railway Station opened in 1919/20.



Working Number: IT1 010
Name: The Hotel Excelsior at the Lido in Venice at the end of construction work
Holding Museum: Archivio Progetti – Università Iuav di Venezia
Date: 1907–08
Materials: -
Curator Justification: -
The grand Hotel Excelsior in Venice, built by Giovanni Sardi and opened in 1908, fuses elements of “Moorish” architecture such as minarets and domes with aspects borrowed from medieval art and Art Nouveau. Its fanciful appearance emphasizes the character of the building as an exotic place for holidays and amusement.



Working Number: PT 003
Name: Pena Palace
Holding Museum: -
Date: 1838–1868

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Given their long, shared history with the Arab world, Portugal, Spain and Italy in particular revived elements of Arab-Islamic architecture in some 19th-century buildings. In Portugal, for example, the Pena Palace in Sintra – the summer residence of the Royal family – is an eclectic and exotic building that also incorporates neo-Islamic styles.



Working Number: FR 001

Name: La mosquée de la maison de Pierre Loti

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1877–1902

Materials: -

Curator Justification: In France, too, 19th-century architecture included occasional expressions of Orientalist taste. The French author Pierre Loti, who travelled extensively in North Africa and other regions of the East, transformed his house in Rochefort into an Orientalist fantasy as a backdrop for his extensive Islamic art collection.
